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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

Number Fifteen

RIVERSIDE LITERATURE SERIES

UNDER THE OLD ELM AND OTHER POEMS

BY

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

WITH NOTES

AND

A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN AND COMPANY
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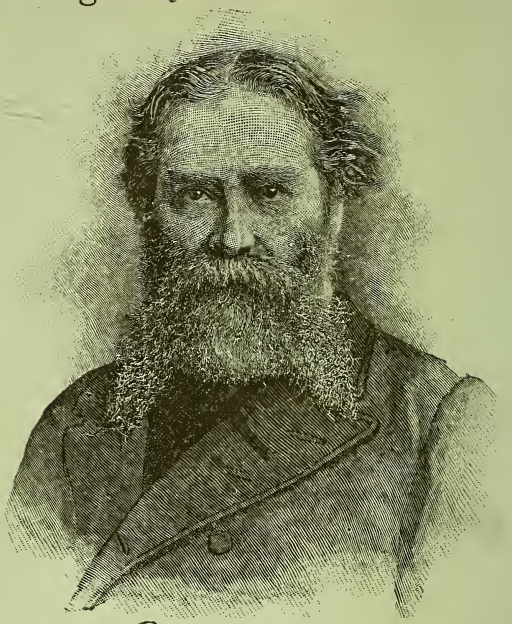
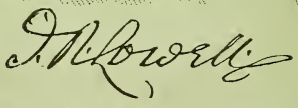
Writings of James Russell Lowell.





It is not necessary to say that Lowell is the first poet of the time or of the country, although it would be possible to maintain that proposition with strong reasons; but it will be conceded, we think, by most who have the capacity of appreciating poetic genius, that in some of his strains he reaches a note as lofty and clear and pure as any this generation has produced, and has written what will have long life in the world, and be hoarded by the wise as treasures of thought and expression. Nature endowed him with a rare quality of imagination, a most fertile fancy, a wonderful wit, and a nice sense of melody. All these gifts have been refined by culture that was at once generous and severe, and directed by aims which ennobled all his efforts. — *Boston Advertiser.*

Continued on inside of Last Cover.

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JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

James Russell Lowell was born February 22, 1819, at Elmwood, Cambridge, Massachusetts, in the house which he still occupies. His early life was spent in Cambridge, and he has sketched many of the scenes in it very delightfully in *Cambridge Thirty Years Ago*, in his volume of *Fireside Travels*, as well as in his early poem, *An Indian Summer Reverie*. His father was a Congregationalist minister of Boston, and the family to which he belongs has had a strong representation in Massachusetts. His grandfather, John Lowell, was an eminent jurist, the Lowell Institute of Boston owes its endowment to John Lowell, a cousin of the poet, and the city of Lowell was named after Francis Cabot Lowell, an uncle, who was one of the first to begin the manufacturing of cotton in New England.

Lowell was a student at Harvard, and was graduated in 1838, when he gave a class poem, and in 1841 his first volume of poems, *A Year's Life*, was published. His bent from the beginning was more decidedly literary than that of any contemporary American poet. That is to say, the history and art of literature divided his interest with the production of literature, and he carries the unusual gift of rare critical power, joined to hearty,

spontaneous creation. It may indeed be guessed that the keenness of judgment and incisiveness of wit which characterize his examination of literature have sometimes interfered with his poetic power, and made him liable to question his art when he would rather have expressed it unchecked. In connection with Robert Carter, a litterateur who has lately died, he began, in 1843, the publication of *The Pioneer, a Literary and Critical Magazine*, which lived a brilliant life of three months. A volume of poetry followed in 1844, and the next year he published *Conversations on Some of the Old Poets*, — a book which is now out of print, but interesting as marking the enthusiasm of a young scholar, treading a way then almost wholly neglected in America, and intimating a line of thought and study in which he has since made most noteworthy ventures. Another series of poems followed in 1848, and in the same year *The Vision of Sir Launfal*. Perhaps it was in reaction from the marked sentiment of his poetry that he issued now a *jeu d'esprit, A Fable for Critics*, in which he hit off, with a rough and ready wit, the characteristics of the writers of the day, not forgetting himself in these lines: —

> "There is Lowell, who 's striving Parnassus to climb
> With a whole bale of *isms* tied together with rhyme;
> He might get on alone, spite of brambles and boulders,
> But he can't with that bundle he has on his shoulders;
> The top of the hill he will ne'er come nigh reaching
> Till he learns the distinction 'twixt singing and preaching;
> His lyre has some chords that would ring pretty well,
> But he 'd rather by half make a drum of the shell,
> And rattle away till he 's old as Methusalem,
> At the head of a march to the last new Jerusalem."

This, of course, is but a half serious portrait of himself, and it touches but a single feature; others can say

better that Lowell's ardent nature showed itself in the series of satirical poems which made him famous, *The Biglow Papers*, written in a spirit of indignation and fine scorn, when the Mexican War was causing many Americans to blush with shame at the use of the country by a class for its own ignoble ends. The true patriotism which marked these and other of his early poems burned with a steady glow in after years, and illumined poems of which we shall speak presently.

After a year and a half spent in travel, Lowell was appointed in 1855 to the Belles Lettres professorship, lately held at Harvard by Longfellow. When the *Atlantic Monthly* was established in 1857 he was editor, and a year or two after relinquishing the post he assumed part editorship of the *North American Review*. In these two magazines, as also in *Putnam's Monthly*, he published poems, essays, and critical papers, which have been gathered into volumes. His prose writings, besides the volumes already mentioned, include two series of *Among my Books*, historical and critical studies, chiefly in English literature; and *My Study Windows*, including, with similar subjects, observations of nature and contemporary life. During the war for the Union he published a second series of the *Biglow Papers*, in which, with the wit and fun of the earlier series, there was mingled a deeper strain of feeling and a larger tone of patriotism. The limitations of his style in these satires forbade the fullest expression of his thought and emotion; but afterward in a succession of poems, occasioned by the honors paid to student-soldiers in Cambridge, the death of Agassiz, and the celebration of national anniversaries during the years 1875 and 1876, he sang in loftier, more ardent strains. The interest

which readers have in Lowell is still divided between his rich, abundant prose, and his thoughtful, often passionate verse. The sentiment of his early poetry, always humane, has been enriched by larger experience; so that the themes which he has lately chosen demand and receive a broad treatment, full of sympathy with the most generous instincts of the present, and built upon historic foundations.

In 1877 he went to Spain as Minister Plenipotentiary. In 1880 he was transferred to England as Minister Plenipotentiary near the Court of St. James. His duties as American Minister have not prevented him from producing occasional writings, which have chiefly been in connection with public events. Notable among these are his address at the unveiling of a statue of Fielding, and his address on Democracy.

UNDER THE OLD ELM.

[Near Cambridge Common stands an old elm, having at its base a stone with the inscription, "Under this tree Washington first took command of the American Army, July 3d, 1775." Upon the one hundredth anniversary of this day the citizens of Cambridge held a celebration under the tree, and Mr. Lowell read the following poem.]

I.

1.

Words pass as wind, but where great deeds were done
A power abides transfused from sire to son:
The boy feels deeper meanings thrill his ear,
That tingling through his pulse life-long shall run,
With sure impulsion to keep honor clear,
When, pointing down, his father whispers, "Here,
Here, where we stand, stood he, the purely Great,
Whose soul no siren passion could unsphere,
Then nameless, now a power and mixed with fate."
Historic town, thou holdest sacred dust,
Once known to men as pious, learnëd, just,
And one memorial pile that dares to last;
But Memory greets with reverential kiss
No spot in all thy circuit sweet as this,

12. Memorial Hall, built by the alumni of Harvard, in memory of those who fell in the war for the Union, a building of more serious thought than any other in Cambridge, and among the few in the country built to endure.

Touched by that modest glory as it past,
O'er which yon elm hath piously displayed
These hundred years its monumental shade.

2.

Of our swift passage through this scenery
Of life and death, more durable than we,
What landmark so congenial as a tree
Repeating its green legend every spring,
And, with a yearly ring,
Recording the fair seasons as they flee,
Type of our brief but still-renewed mortality?
We fall as leaves: the immortal trunk remains,
Builded with costly juice of hearts and brains
Gone to the mould now, whither all that be
Vanish returnless, yet are procreant still
In human lives to come of good or ill,
And feed unseen the roots of Destiny.

II.

1.

Men's monuments, grown old, forget their names
They should eternize, but the place
Where shining souls have passed imbibes a grace
Beyond mere earth; some sweetness of their fames
Leaves in the soil its unextinguished trace,
Pungent, pathetic, sad with nobler aims,
That penetrates our lives and heightens them or shames.
This insubstantial world and fleet
Seems solid for a moment when we stand
On dust ennobled by heroic feet

Once mighty to sustain a tottering land,
And mighty still such burthen to upbear,
Nor doomed to tread the path of things that merely were:
Our sense, refined with virtue of the spot,
Across the mists of Lethe's sleepy stream
Recalls him, the sole chief without a blot,
No more a pallid image and a dream,
But as he dwelt with men decorously supreme.

2.

Our grosser minds need this terrestrial hint
To raise long-buried days from tombs of print:
"Here stood he," softly we repeat,
And lo, the statue shrined and still
In that gray minster-front we call the Past,
Feels in its frozen veins our pulses thrill,
Breathes living air and mocks at Death's deceit.
It warms, it stirs, comes down to us at last,
Its features human with familiar light,
A man, beyond the historian's art to kill,
Or sculptor's to efface with patient chisel-blight.

3.

Sure the dumb earth hath memory, nor for naught
Was Fancy given, on whose enchanted loom
Present and Past commingle, fruit and bloom
Of one fair bough, inseparably wrought
Into the seamless tapestry of thought.
So charmed, with undeluded eye we see
In history's fragmentary tale
Bright clews of continuity,
Learn that high natures over Time prevail,

And feel ourselves a link in that entail
That binds all ages past with all that are to be.

III.

1.

Beneath our consecrated elm
A century ago he stood,
Famed vaguely for that old fight in the wood
Whose red surge sought, but could not overwhelm
The life foredoomed to wield our rough-hewn helm : —
From colleges, where now the gown
To arms had yielded, from the town,
Our rude self-summoned levies flocked to see
The new-come chiefs and wonder which was he.
No need to question long ; close-lipped and tall,
Long trained in murder-brooding forests lone
To bridle others' clamors and his own,
Firmly erect, he towered above them all,
The incarnate discipline that was to free
With iron curb that armed democracy.

2.

A motley rout was that which came to stare,
In raiment tanned by years of sun and storm,

73. Referring to Braddock's defeat, when Washington wrote to his brother : "By the all-powerful dispensations of Providence I have been protected beyond all human probability or expectation ; for I had four bullets through my coat, and two horses shot under me, yet I escaped unhurt, although death was levelling my companions on every side of me."

76. Study in Cambridge was suspended, the buildings used as barracks, and the students sent to Concord.

86. The letters of Washington and of other generals in the early part of the Revolutionary War bear repeated witness to the undisciplined character of the troops. "I found a mixed multitude of people here," writes Washington, July 27th, "under very little discipline, order, or government."

Of every shape that was not uniform,
Dotted with regimentals here and there;
An army all of captains, used to pray
And stiff in fight, but serious drill's despair,
Skilled to debate their orders, not obey;
Deacons were there, selectmen, men of note
In half-tamed hamlets ambushed round with woods,
Ready to settle Freewill by a vote,
But largely liberal to its private moods;
Prompt to assert by manners, voice, or pen,
Or ruder arms, their rights as Englishmen,
Nor much fastidious as to how and when:
Yet seasoned stuff and fittest to create
A thought-staid army or a lasting state:
Haughty they said he was, at first; severe;
But owned, as all men own, the steady hand
Upon the bridle, patient to command,
Prized, as all prize, the justice pure from fear,
And learned to honor first, then love him, then revere.
Such power there is in clear-eyed self-restraint
And purpose clean as light from every selfish taint.

3.

Musing beneath the legendary tree,
The years between furl off: I seem to see
The sun-flecks, shaken the stirred foliage through,
Dapple with gold his sober buff and blue
And weave prophetic aureoles round the head
That shines our beacon now nor darkens with the dead.

112. The American colors in the Revolution were buff and blue. Fox wore them in Parliament, as did Burke also on occasion. There is discussion as to the origin of the colors, for which see Stanhope's *Miscellanies*, First Series, pp. 116–122, and *Proc. Mass. Hist. Soc.*, Jan., 1859, pp. 149–154.

O man of silent mood,
A stranger among strangers then,
How art thou since renowned the Great, the Good,
Familiar as the day in all the homes of men!
The wingëd years, that winnow praise and blame,
Blow many names out: they but fan to flame
The self-renewing splendors of thy fame.

IV.

1.

How many subtlest influences unite,
With spiritual touch of joy or pain,
Invisible as air and soft as light,
To body forth that image of the brain
We call our Country, visionary shape,
Loved more than woman, fuller of fire than wine,
Whose charm can none define,
Nor any, though he flee it, can escape!
All party-colored threads the weaver Time
Sets in his web, now trivial, now sublime,
All memories, all forebodings, hopes and fears,
Mountain and river, forest, prairie, sea,
A hill, a rock, a homestead, field, or tree,
The casual gleanings of unreckoned years,
Take goddess-shape at last and there is She,
Old at our birth, new as the springing hours,
Shrine of our weakness, fortress of our powers,
Consoler, kindler, peerless mid her peers,
A force that 'neath our conscious being stirs,
A life to give ours permanence, when we
Are borne to mingle our poor earth with hers,
And all this glowing world goes with us on our biers.

2.

Nations are long results, by ruder ways
Gathering the might that warrants length of days;
They may be pieced of half-reluctant shares
Welded by hammer-strokes of broad-brained kings,
Or from a doughty people grow, the heirs
Of wise traditions widening cautious rings;
At best they are computable things,
A strength behind us making us feel bold
In right, or, as may chance, in wrong;
Whose force by figures may be summed and told
So many soldiers, ships, and dollars strong,
And we but drops that bear compulsory part
In the dumb throb of a mechanic heart;
But Country is a shape of each man's mind
Sacred from definition, unconfined
By the cramped walls where daily drudgeries grind;
An inward vision, yet an outward birth
Of sweet familiar heaven and earth;
A brooding Presence that stirs motions blind
Of wings within our embryo being's shell
That wait but her completer spell
To make us eagle-natured, fit to dare
Life's nobler spaces and untarnished air.

3.

You, who hold dear this self-conceived ideal,
Whose faith and works alone can make it real,
Bring all your fairest gifts to deck her shrine
Who lifts our lives away from Thine and Mine
And feeds the lamp of manhood more divine
With fragrant oils of quenchless constancy.

When all have done their utmost, surely he
Hath given the best who gives a character
Erect and constant, which nor any shock
Of loosened elements, nor the forceful sea
Of flowing or of ebbing fates, can stir
From its deep bases in the living rock
Of ancient manhood's sweet security:
And this he gave, serenely far from pride
As baseness, boon with prosperous stars allied,
Part of what nobler seed shall in our loins abide.

4.

No bond of men as common pride so strong,
In names time-filtered for the lips of song,
Still operant, with the primal Forces bound,
Whose currents, on their spiritual round,
Transfuse our mortal will nor are gainsaid:
These are their arsenals, these the exhaustless mines
That give a constant heart in great designs;
These are the stuff whereof such dreams are made
As make heroic men: thus surely he
Still holds in place the massy blocks he laid
'Neath our new frame, enforcing soberly
The self-control that makes and keeps a people free.

190. A reminiscence of Shakespeare's lines, —

> We are such stuff
> As dreams are made on, and our little life
> Is rounded with a sleep.
>
> *The Tempest*, Act IV. Scene 1.

V.

1.

Oh, for a drop of that Cornelian ink
Which gave Agricola dateless length of days,
To celebrate him fitly, neither swerve
To phrase unkempt, nor pass discretion's brink
With him so statue-like in sad reserve,
So diffident to claim, so forward to deserve!
Nor need I shun due influence of his fame
Who, mortal among mortals, seemed as now
The equestrian shape with unimpassioned brow,
That paces silent on through vistas of acclaim.

2.

What figure more immovably august
Than that grave strength so patient and so pure,
Calm in good fortune, when it wavered, sure,
That mind serene, impenetrably just,
Modelled on classic lines so simple they endure?
That soul so softly radiant and so white
The track it left seems less of fire than light,
Cold but to such as love distemperature?
And if pure light, as some deem, be the force
That drives rejoicing planets on their course,
Why for his power benign seek an impurer source?
His was the true enthusiasm that burns long,
Domestically bright,
Fed from itself and shy of human sight,
The hidden force that makes a lifetime strong,

195. It was Caius Cornelius Tacitus who wrote in imperishable words the life of Agricola.

And not the short-lived fuel of a song.
Passionless, say you? What is passion for
But to sublime our natures and control
To front heroic toils with late return,
Or none, or such as shames the conqueror?
That fire was fed with substance of the soul
And not with holiday stubble, that could burn,
Unpraised of men who after bonfires run,
Through seven slow years of unadvancing war,
Equal when fields were lost or fields were won,
With breath of popular applause or blame,
Nor fanned nor damped, unquenchably the same,
Too inward to be reached by flaws of idle fame.

3.

Soldier and statesman, rarest unison;
High-poised example of great duties done
Simply as breathing, a world's honors worn
As life's indifferent gifts to all men born;
Dumb for himself, unless it were to God,
But for his barefoot soldiers eloquent,
Tramping the snow to coral where they trod,
Held by his awe in hollow-eyed content;
Modest, yet firm as Nature's self; unblamed
Save by the men his nobler temper shamed;
Never seduced through show of present good
By other than unsetting lights to steer
New-trimmed in Heaven, nor than his steadfast mood
More steadfast, far from rashness as from fear;
Rigid, but with himself first, grasping still
In swerveless poise the wave-beat helm of will:
Not honored then or now because he wooed

239. At Valley Forge.

The popular voice, but that he still withstood;
Broad-minded, higher-souled, there is but one
Who was all this and ours, and all men's, — WASHINGTON.

4.

Minds strong by fits, irregularly great,
That flash and darken like revolving lights,
Catch more the vulgar eye unschooled to wait
On the long curve of patient days and nights
Rounding a whole life to the circle fair
Of orbed fulfilment; and this balanced soul,
So simple in its grandeur, coldly bare
Of draperies theatric, standing there
In perfect symmetry of self-control,
Seems not so great at first, but greater grows
Still as we look, and by experience learn
How grand this quiet is, how nobly stern
The discipline that wrought through life-long throes
That energetic passion of repose.

5.

A nature too decorous and severe,
Too self-respectful in its griefs and joys,
For ardent girls and boys
Who find no genius in a mind so clear
That its grave depths seem obvious and near,
Nor a soul great that made so little noise.
They feel no force in that calm-cadenced phrase,
The habitual full-dress of his well-bred mind,
That seems to pace the minuet's courtly maze

267. The rhythm shows the pronunciation to be decō′rous. The poets vary in their usage. An analagous word is sonorous. Decorum always has the accent on the second syllable.

And tell of ampler leisures, roomier length of days.
His firm-based brain, to self so little kind
That no tumultuary blood could blind,
Formed to control men, not to amaze,
Looms not like those that borrow height of haze:
It was a world of statelier movement then
Than this we fret in, he a denizen
Of that ideal Rome that made a man for men.

VI.

1.

The longer on this earth we live
And weigh the various qualities of men,
Seeing how most are fugitive,
Or fitful gifts, at best, of now and then,
Wind-wavered corpse-lights, daughters of the fen,
The more we feel the high stern-featured beauty
Of plain devotedness to duty,
Steadfast and still, nor paid with mortal praise,
But finding amplest recompense
For life's ungarlanded expense
In work done squarely and unwasted days.
For this we honor him, that he could know
How sweet the service and how free
Of her, God's eldest daughter here below,
And choose in meanest raiment which was she.

2.

Placid completeness, life without a fall
From faith or highest aims, truth's breachless wall,

288. *The daughters of the fen*, — will-o'-the-wisps. The Welsh call the same phenomenon *corpse-lights*, because it was supposed to forebode death, and to show the road that the corpse would take.

Surely if any fame can bear the touch,
His will say "Here!" at the last trumpet's call,
The unexpressive man whose life expressed so much.

VII.

1.

Never to see a nation born
Hath been given to mortal man,
Unless to those who, on that summer morn,
Gazed silent when the great Virginian
Unsheathed the sword whose fatal flash
Shot union through the incoherent clash
Of our loose atoms, crystallizing them
Around a single will's unpliant stem,
And making purpose of emotion rash.
Out of that scabbard sprang, as from its womb,
Nebulous at first but hardening to a star,
Through mutual share of sunburst and of gloom,
The common faith that made us what we are.

2.

That lifted blade transformed our jangling clans,
Till then provincial, to Americans,
And made a unity of wildering plans;
Here was the doom fixed: here is marked the date
When the New World awoke to man's estate,
Burnt its last ship and ceased to look behind:
Nor thoughtless was the choice; no love or hate
Could from its poise move that deliberate mind,
Weighing between too early and too late
Those pitfalls of the man refused by Fate:
His was the impartial vision of the great

Who see not as they wish, but as they find.
He saw the dangers of defeat, nor less
The incomputable perils of success;
The sacred past thrown by, an empty rind;
The future, cloud-land, snare of prophets blind;
The waste of war, the ignominy of peace;
On either hand a sullen rear of woes,
Whose garnered lightnings none could guess,
Piling its thunder-heads and muttering "Cease!"
Yet drew not back his hand, but bravely chose
The seeming-desperate task whence our new nation rose.

3.

A noble choice and of immortal seed!
Nor deem that acts heroic wait on chance
Or easy were as in a boy's romance;
The man's whole life preludes the single deed
That shall decide if his inheritance
Be with the sifted few of matchless breed,
Our race's sap and sustenance,
Or with the unmotived herd that only sleep and feed.
Choice seems a thing indifferent; thus or so,
What matters it? The Fates with mocking face
Look on inexorable, nor seem to know
Where the lot lurks that gives life's foremost place.
Yet Duty's leaden casket holds it still,
And but two ways are offered to our will,
Toil with rare triumph, ease with safe disgrace,
The problem still for us and all of human race.
He chose, as men choose, where most danger showed,

351. See Shakespeare's play of *The Merchant of Venice* with its three caskets of gold, silver, and lead, from which the suitors of Portia were to choose fate.

Nor ever faltered 'neath the load
Of petty cares, that gall great hearts the most,
But kept right on the strenuous up-hill road,
Strong to the end, above complaint or boast:
The popular tempest on his rock-mailed coast
Wasted its wind-borne spray,
The noisy marvel of a day;
His soul sate still in its unstormed abode.

VIII.

Virginia gave us this imperial man
Cast in the massive mould
Of those high-statured ages old
Which into grander forms our mortal metal ran;
She gave us this unblemished gentleman:
What shall we give her back but love and praise
As in the dear old unestrangëd days
Before the inevitable wrong began?
Mother of States and undiminished men,
Thou gavest us a country, giving him,
And we owe alway what we owed thee then:
The boon thou wouldst have snatched from us again
Shines as before with no abatement dim.
A great man's memory is the only thing
With influence to outlast the present whim
And bind us as when here he knit our golden ring.
All of him that was subject to the hours
Lies in thy soil and makes it part of ours:
Across more recent graves,
Where unresentful Nature waves
Her pennons o'er the shot-ploughed sod,
Proclaiming the sweet Truce of God,

385. The name is drawn from a compact in 1640 when the Church forbade

We from this consecrated plain stretch out
Our hands as free from afterthought or doubt
As here the united North
Poured her embrownëd manhood forth
In welcome of our saviour and thy son.
Through battle we have better learned thy worth,
The long-breathed valor and undaunted will,
Which, like his own, the day's disaster done,
Could, safe in manhood, suffer and be still.
Both thine and ours the victory hardly won;
If ever with distempered voice or pen
We have misdeemed thee, here we take it back,
And for the dead of both don common black.
Be to us evermore as thou wast then,
As we forget thou hast not always been,
Mother of States and unpolluted men,
Virginia, fitly named from England's manly queen!

the barons to make any attack on their fellows between sunset on Wednesday and sunrise on the following Monday, or upon any ecclesiastical fast or feast day. It also provided that no man was to molest a laborer working in the fields, or to lay hands on any implement of husbandry, on pain of excommunication.

ODE

READ AT THE ONE HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FIGHT AT CONCORD BRIDGE, APRIL 19, 1875.

I.

Who cometh over the hills,
Her garments with morning sweet,
The dance of a thousand rills
Making music before her feet?
Her presence freshens the air;
Sunshine steals light from her face;
The leaden footstep of Care
Leaps to the tune of her pace,
Fairness of all that is fair,
Grace at the heart of all grace,
Sweetener of hut and of hall,
Bringer of life out of naught,
Freedom, oh, fairest of all
The daughters of Time and Thought!

II.

She cometh, cometh to-day:
Hark! hear ye not her tread,
Sending a thrill through your clay,
Under the sod there, ye dead,
Her nurslings and champions?
Do you not hear, as she comes,

The bay of the deep-mouthed guns,
The gathering buzz of the drums?
The bells that called ye to prayer,
How wildly they clamor on her,
Crying, "She cometh! prepare
Her to praise and her to honor,
That a hundred years ago
Scattered here in blood and tears
Potent seeds wherefrom should grow
Gladness for a hundred years!"

III.

Tell me, young men, have ye seen
Creature of diviner mien
For true hearts to long and cry for,
Manly hearts to live and die for?
What hath she that others want?
Brows that all endearments haunt,
Eyes that make it sweet to dare,
Smiles that glad untimely death,
Looks that fortify despair,
Tones more brave than trumpet's breath;
Tell me, maidens, have ye known
Household charm more sweetly rare,
Grace of woman ampler blown,
Modesty more debonair,
Younger heart with wit full grown?
Oh, for an hour of my prime,
The pulse of my hotter years,
That I might praise her in rhyme
Would tingle your eyelids to tears,
Our sweetness, our strength, and our star,
Our hope, our joy, and our trust,

Who lifted us out of the dust,
And made us whatever we are!

IV.

Whiter than moonshine upon snow
Her raiment is, but round the hem
Crimson stained; and, as to and fro
Her sandals flash, we see on them,
And on her instep veined with blue,
Flecks of crimson, on those fair feet,
High-arched, Diana-like, and fleet,
Fit for no grosser stain than dew:
Oh, call them rather chrisms than stains,
Sacred and from heroic veins!
For, in the glory-guarded pass,
Her haughty and far-shining head
She bowed to shrive Leonidas
With his imperishable dead;
Her, too, Morgarten saw,
Where the Swiss lion fleshed his icy paw;
She followed Cromwell's quenchless star
Where the grim Puritan tread
Shook Marston, Naseby, and Dunbar:

66. The Spartan king who with his 300 Spartans and 700 Thespians died a heroic death while defending the pass of Thermopylæ.

68. *Morgarten*, a mountain between which and Lake Ägeri is the pass where, on November 15, 1315, the Swiss confederates were victorious over Leopold of Austria, slaughtering the flower of the Austrian chivalry, 1,500 in number.

72. At the battle of Marston Moor (in Yorkshire, England), July 2, 1644, Cromwell at the head of his picked troops (Ironsides) totally defeated Prince Rupert. This victory gave the north of England to Parliament.

72. Naseby, in Northampton County, England. The troops of Charles I. were here completely defeated by the Parliamentary Army on July 14, 1646.

72. Dunbar, 30 miles N. N. E. of Edinburgh, Scotland. Here on September 3, 1660, Cromwell with 16,000 troops totally defeated the Scots under Leslie.

Yea, on her feet are dearer dyes
Yet fresh, nor looked on with untearful eyes.

V.

Our fathers found her in the woods
Where Nature meditates and broods,
The seeds of unexampled things
Which Time to consummation brings
Through life and death and man's unstable moods;
They met her here, not recognized,
A sylvan huntress clothed in furs,
To whose chaste wants her bow sufficed,
Nor dreamed what destinies were hers:
She taught them bee-like to create
Their simpler forms of Church and State;
She taught them to endue
The past with other functions than it knew,
And turn in channels strange the uncertain stream of Fate;
Better than all, she fenced them in their need
With iron-handed Duty's sternest creed,
'Gainst Self's lean wolf that ravens word and deed.

VI.

Why cometh she hither to-day
To this low village of the plain
Far from the Present's loud highway,
From Trade's cool heart and seething brain?
Why cometh she? She was not far away.
Since the soul touched it, not in vain,
With pathos of immortal gain,

73. The reference is to the war for the Union, closed ten years before, but still fresh in the memory of those who had taken part in it.

'T is here her fondest memories stay.
She loves yon pine-bemurmured ridge
Where now our broad-browed poet sleeps,
Dear to both Englands; near him he
Who wore the ring of Canace;
But most her heart to rapture leaps
Where stood that era-parting bridge,
O'er which, with footfall still as dew,
The Old Time passed into the New;
Where, as your stealthy river creeps,
He whispers to his listening weeds
Tales of sublimest homespun deeds.
Here English law and English thought
'Gainst the self-will of England fought;
And here were men (coequal with their fate)
Who did great things, unconscious they were great.
They dreamed not what a die was cast
With that first answering shot; what then?
There was their duty; they were men
Schooled the soul's inward gospel to obey,
Though leading to the lion's den.
They felt the habit-hallowed world give way
Beneath their lives, and on went they,
Unhappy who was last.
When Buttrick gave the word,
That awful idol of the unchallenged Past,

101. Nathaniel Hawthorne is here referred to, the word poet being used in its broad sense of a person of creative imagination.

103. Henry D. Thoreau is here referred to. The ring of Canace is supposed to reveal to the wearer the secrets of nature: to enable him to understand the language of birds, etc. See Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, lines 14,922–14,931.

123. Major John Buttrick, one of the officers in command of the provincials on the 19th of April, 1775. At the North Bridge he began the opposition to the British with the memorable command, "Fire, fellow-soldiers, for God's sake fire!" at the same time discharging his own gun.

Strong in their love, and in their lineage strong,
Fell crashing: if they heard it not,
Yet the earth heard,
Nor ever hath forgot,
As on from startled throne to throne,
Where Superstition sate or conscious Wrong,
A shudder ran of some dread birth unknown.
Thrice venerable spot!
River more fateful than the Rubicon!
O'er those red planks, to snatch her diadem,
Man's Hope, star-girdled, sprang with them,
And over ways untried the feet of Doom strode on.

VII.

Think you these felt no charms
In their gray homesteads and embowered farms?
In household faces waiting at the door
Their evening step should lighten up no more?
In fields their boyish feet had known?
In trees their fathers' hands had set,
And which with them had grown,
Widening each year their leafy coronet?
Felt they no pang of passionate regret
For those unsolid goods that seem so much our own?
These things are dear to every man that lives,
And life prized more for what it lends than gives.
Yea, many a tie, by iteration sweet,
Strove to detain their fatal feet;
And yet the enduring half they chose,
Whose choice decides a man life's slave or king,

133. The Rubicon was the stream crossed by Julius Cæsar when he left the province over which he had been placed, and thus put himself in opposition to the government of Rome.

The invisible things of God before the seen and known:
Therefore their memory inspiration blows
With echoes gathering on from zone to zone;
For manhood is the one immortal thing
Beneath Time's changeful sky,
And, where it lightened once, from age to age,
Men come to learn, in grateful pilgrimage,
That length of days is knowing when to die.

VIII.

What marvellous change of things and men!
She, a world-wandering orphan then,
So mighty now! Those are her streams
That whirl the myriad, myriad wheels
Of all that does, and all that dreams,
Of all that thinks, and all that feels,
Through spaces stretched from sea to sea;
By idle tongues and busy brains,
By who doth right, and who refrains,
Hers are our losses and our gains;
Our maker and our victim she.

IX.

Maiden half mortal, half divine,
We triumphed in thy coming; to the brinks
Our hearts were filled with pride's tumultuous wine;
Better to-day who rather feels than thinks.
Yet will some graver thoughts intrude,
And cares of sterner mood;
They won thee: who shall keep thee? From the deeps
Where discrowned empires o'er their ruins brood,

And many a thwarted hope wrings its weak hands
and weeps,
I hear the voice as of a mighty wind
From all heaven's caverns rushing unconfined,
"I, Freedom, dwell with Knowledge: I abide
With men whom dust of faction cannot blind
To the slow tracings of the Eternal Mind;
With men by culture trained and fortified,
Who bitter duty to sweet lusts prefer,
Fearless to counsel and obey.
Conscience my sceptre is, and law my sword,
Not to be drawn in passion or in play,
But terrible to punish and deter;
Implacable as God's word,
Like it, a shepherd's crook to them that blindly err.
Your firm-pulsed sires, my martyrs and my saints,
Shoots of that only race whose patient sense
Hath known to mingle flux with permanence,
Rated my chaste denials and restraints
Above the moment's dear-paid paradise:
Beware lest, shifting with Time's gradual creep,
The light that guided shine into your eyes.
The envious Powers of ill nor wink nor sleep:
Be therefore timely wise,
Nor laugh when this one steals, and that one lies,
As if your luck could cheat those sleepless spies,
Till the deaf Fury comes your house to sweep!"
I hear the voice, and unaffrighted bow;
Ye shall not be prophetic now,
Heralds of ill, that darkening fly
Between my vision and the rainbowed sky,
Or on the left your hoarse forebodings croak
From many a blasted bough

On Yggdrasil's storm-sinewed oak,
That once was green, Hope of the West, as thou:
Yet pardon if I tremble while I boast;
For I have loved as those who pardon most.

x.

Away, ungrateful doubt, away!
At least she is our own to-day.
Break into rapture, my song,
Verses, leap forth in the sun,
Bearing the joyance along
Like a train of fire as ye run!
Pause not for choosing of words,
Let them but blossom and sing
Blithe as the orchards and birds
With the new coming of spring!
Dance in your jollity, bells;
Shout, cannon; cease not, ye drums;
Answer, ye hill-side and dells;
Bow, all ye people! She comes,
Radiant, calm-fronted, as when
She hallowed that April day.
Stay with us! Yes, thou shalt stay,
Softener and strengthener of men,
Freedom, not won by the vain,
Not to be courted in play,
Not to be kept without pain.
Stay with us! Yes, thou wilt stay,
Handmaid and mistress of all,
Kindler of deed and of thought,

212. Yggdrasil, according to the Scandinavian Mythology, is "The tree of the universe," under which the gods assemble every day in council. Its branches spread over the whole world and tower up above the heavens.

Thou that to hut and to hall
Equal deliverance brought!
Souls of her martyrs, draw near,
Touch our dull lips with your fire,
That we may praise without fear
Her our delight, our desire,
Our faith's inextinguishable star,
Our hope, our remembrance, our trust,
Our present, our past, our to be,
Who will mingle her life with our dust
And makes us deserve to be free!

UNDER THE WILLOWS.

Frank-hearted hostess of the field and wood,
Gypsy, whose roof is every spreading tree,
June is the pearl of our New England year.
Still a surprisal, though expected long,
Her coming startles. Long she lies in wait,
Makes many a feint, peeps forth, draws coyly back,
Then, from some southern ambush in the sky,
With one great gush of blossom storms the world.
A week ago the sparrow was divine;
The bluebird, shifting his light load of song
From post to post along the cheerless fence,
Was as a rhymer ere the poet come;
But now, oh rapture! sunshine winged and voiced,
Pipe blown through by the warm wild breath of the West
Shepherding his soft droves of fleecy cloud,
Gladness of woods, skies, waters, all in one,
The bobolink has come, and, like the soul
Of the sweet season vocal in a bird,

17. Bryant has a charming poem, *Robert of Lincoln*, in which the light-hearted song of the bird gets a homelier but no less delightful interpretation. See, also, Lowell's lines in *Suthin' in the Pastoral Line*, No. VI. of the second series of *The Biglow Papers*: —

"'Nuff sed, June's bridesman, poet o' the year,
Gladness on wings, the bobolink is here;
Half-hid in tip-top apple-blooms he swings,
Or climbs aginst the breeze with quiverin' wings,
Or, givin' way to 't in a mock despair,
Runs down, a brook o' laughter, thru the air."

Gurgles in ecstasy we know not what
Save *June! Dear June! Now God be praised for June.*

May is a pious fraud of the almanac,
A ghastly parody of real Spring
Shaped out of snow and breathed with eastern wind;
Or if, o'er-confident, she trust the date,
And, with her handful of anemones,
Herself as shivery, steal into the sun,
The season need but turn his hour-glass round,
And winter suddenly, like crazy Lear,
Reels back, and brings the dead May in his arms,
Her budding breasts and wan dislustred front
With frosty streaks and drifts of his white beard
All overblown. Then, warmly walled with books,
While my wood-fire supplies the sun's defect,
Whispering old forest-sagas in its dreams,
I take my May down from the happy shelf
Where perch the world's rare song-birds in a row,
Waiting my choice to open with full breast,
And beg an alms of spring-time, ne'er denied
In-doors by vernal Chaucer, whose fresh woods
Throb thick with merle and mavis all the year.

July breathes hot, sallows the crispy fields,
Curls up the wan leaves of the lilac-hedge,
And every eve cheats us with show of clouds
That braze the horizon's western rim, or hang
Motionless, with heaped canvas drooping idly,

28. In the fifth act of Shakespeare's *King Lear*, Lear enters with Cordelia dead in his arms.

44. *I. e.*, that give a brazen hue and hardness to the western sky at sunset.

Like a dim fleet by starving men besieged,
Conjectured half, and half descried afar,
Helpless of wind, and seeming to slip back
Adown the smooth curve of the oily sea.

But June is full of invitations sweet,
Forth from the chimney's yawn and thrice-read tomes
To leisurely delights and sauntering thoughts
That brook no ceiling narrower than the blue.
The cherry, drest for bridal, at my pane
Brushes, then listens, *Will he come?* The bee,
All dusty as a miller, takes his toll
Of powdery gold, and grumbles. What a day
To sun me and do nothing! Nay, I think
Merely to bask and ripen is sometimes
The student's wiser business; the brain
That forages all climes to line its cells,
Ranging both worlds on lightest wings of wish,
Will not distil the juices it has sucked
To the sweet substance of pellucid thought,
Except for him who hath the secret learned
To mix his blood with sunshine, and to take
The winds into his pulses. Hush! 't is he!
My oriole, my glance of summer fire,
Is come at last, and, ever on the watch,
Twitches the pack-thread I had lightly wound
About the bough to help his housekeeping, —
Twitches and scouts by turns, blessing his luck,
Yet fearing me who laid it in his way,
Nor, more than wiser we in our affairs,
Divines the providence that hides and helps.
Heave, ho! Heave, ho! he whistles as the twine
Slackens its hold; *once more, now!* and a flash

Lightens across the sunlight to the elm
Where his mate dangles at her cup of felt.
Nor all his booty is the thread; he trails
My loosened thought with it along the air,
And I must follow, would I ever find
The inward rhyme to all this wealth of life.

I care not how men trace their ancestry,
To ape or Adam; let them please their whim;
But I in June am midway to believe
A tree among my far progenitors,
Such sympathy is mine with all the race,
Such mutual recognition vaguely sweet
There is between us. Surely there are times
When they consent to own me of their kin,
And condescend to me, and call me cousin,
Murmuring faint lullabies of eldest time,
Forgotten, and yet dumbly felt with thrills
Moving the lips, though fruitless of the words.
And I have many a life-long leafy friend,
Never estranged nor careful of my soul,
That knows I hate the axe, and welcomes me
Within his tent as if I were a bird,
Or other free companion of the earth,
Yet undegenerate to the shifts of men.
Among them one, an ancient willow, spreads
Eight balanced limbs, springing at once all round
His deep-ridged trunk with upward slant diverse,
In outline like enormous beaker, fit
For hand of Jotun, where, 'mid snow and mist
He holds unwieldy revel. This tree, spared,
I know not by what grace, — for in the blood

106. Jotun is a giant in the Scandinavian mythology.

Of our New World subduers lingers yet
Hereditary feud with trees, they being
(They and the red-man most) our fathers' foes, —
Is one of six, a willow Pleiades,
The seventh fallen, that lean along the brink
Where the steep upland dips into the marsh,
Their roots, like molten metal cooled in flowing,
Stiffen in coils and runnels down the bank.
The friend of all the winds, wide-armed he towers
And glints his steely aglets in the sun,
Or whitens fitfully with sudden bloom
Of leaves breeze-lifted, much as when a shoal
Of devious minnows wheel from where a pike
Lurks balanced 'neath the lily-pads, and whirl
A rood of silver bellies to the day.

Alas! no acorn from the British oak
'Neath which slim fairies tripping wrought those rings
Of greenest emerald, wherewith fireside life
Did with the invisible spirit of Nature wed,
Was ever planted here! No darnel fancy
Might choke one useful blade in Puritan fields;
With horn and hoof the good old Devil came,
The witch's broomstick was not contraband,
But all that superstition had of fair,
Or piety of native sweet, was doomed.
And if there be who nurse unholy faiths,
Fearing their god as if he were a wolf

112. The Pleiades were seven daughters of Atlas and Pleione; to escape the hunter Orion, they begged to be changed in form, and were made a constellation in the heavens. Only six were visible to the naked eye, so the seventh was held to be a lost Pleiad, and several stories were told to account for the loss.

That snuffed round every home, and was not seen,
There should be some to watch and keep alive
All beautiful beliefs. And such was that, —
By solitary shepherd first surmised
Under Thessalian oaks, loved by some maid
Of royal stirp, that silent came and vanished,
As near her nest the hermit thrush, nor dared
Confess a mortal name, — that faith which gave
A Hamadryad to each tree; and I
Will hold it true that in this willow dwells
The open-handed spirit, frank and blithe,
Of ancient Hospitality, long since,
With ceremonious thrift, bowed out of doors.

In June 't is good to lie beneath a tree
While the blithe season comforts every sense,
Steeps all the brain in rest, and heals the heart,
Brimming it o'er with sweetness unawares,
Fragrant and silent as that rosy snow
Wherewith the pitying apple-tree fills up
And tenderly lines some last-year robin's nest.
There muse I of old times, old hopes, old friends, —
Old friends! The writing of those words has borne
My fancy backward to the gracious past,
The generous past, when all was possible,
For all was then untried; the years between
Have taught some sweet, some bitter lessons, none
Wiser than this, — to spend in all things else,
But of old friends to be most miserly.
Each year to ancient friendships adds a ring,
As to an oak, and precious more and more,
Without deservingness or help of ours,
They grow, and, silent, wider spread, each year,

Their unbought ring of shelter or of shade.
Sacred to me the lichens on the bark,
Which Nature's milliners would scrape away;
Most dear and sacred every withered limb!
'T is good to set them early, for our faith
Pines as we age, and, after wrinkles come,
Few plant, but water dead ones with vain tears.
This willow is as old to me as life;
And under it full often have I stretched,
Feeling the warm earth like a thing alive,
And gathering virtue in at every pore
Till it possessed me wholly, and thought ceased,
Or was transfused in something to which thought
Is coarse and dull of sense. Myself was lost,
Gone from me like an ache, and what remained
Became a part of the universal joy.
My soul went forth, and, mingling with the tree,
Danced in the leaves; or, floating in the cloud,
Saw its white double in the stream below;
Or else, sublimed to purer ecstasy,
Dilated in the broad blue over all.
I was the wind that dappled the lush grass,
The tide that crept with coolness to its roots,
The thin-winged swallow skating on the air;
The life that gladdened everything was mine.
Was I then truly all that I beheld?
Or is this stream of being but a glass
Where the mind sees its visionary self,
As, when the kingfisher flits o'er his bay,
Across the river's hollow heaven below,
His picture flits, — another, yet the same?
But suddenly the sound of human voice
Or footfall, like the drop a chemist pours,

Doth in opacous cloud precipitate
The consciousness that seemed but now dissolved
Into an essence rarer than its own,
And I am narrowed to myself once more.

For here not long is solitude secure,
Nor Fantasy left vacant to her spell.
Here, sometimes, in this paradise of shade,
Rippled with western winds, the dusty Tramp,
Seeing the treeless causey burn beyond,
Halts to unroll his bundle of strange food
And munch an unearned meal. I cannot help
Liking this creature, lavish Summer's bedesman,
Who from the almshouse steals when nights grow warm,
Himself his large estate and only charge,
To be the guest of haystack or of hedge,
Nobly superior to the household gear
That forfeits us our privilege of nature.
I bait him with my match-box and my pouch,
Nor grudge the uncostly sympathy of smoke,
His equal now, divinely unemployed.
Some smack of Robin Hood is in the man,
Some secret league with wild wood-wandering things;
He is our ragged Duke, our barefoot Earl,
By right of birth exonerate from toil,
Who levies rent from us his tenants all,
And serves the state by merely being. Here,
The Scissors-grinder, pausing, doffs his hat,
And lets the kind breeze, with its delicate fan,
Winnow the heat from out his dank gray hair, —
A grimy Ulysses, a much-wandered man,

230. *Ulysses*, the hero of Homer's *Odyssey*, receives the epithet *much wan-*

Whose feet are known to all the populous ways,
And many men and manners he hath seen,
Not without fruit of solitary thought.
He, as the habit is of lonely men, —
Unused to try the temper of their mind
In fence with others, — positive and shy,
Yet knows to put an edge upon his speech,
Pithily Saxon in unwilling talk.
Him I entrap with my long-suffering knife,
And, while its poor blade hums away in sparks,
Sharpen my wit upon his gritty mind,
In motion set obsequious to his wheel,
And in its quality not much unlike.

Nor wants my tree more punctual visitors.
The children, they who are the only rich,
Creating for the moment, and possessing
Whate'er they choose to feign, — for still with them
Kind Fancy plays the fairy godmother,
Strewing their lives with cheap material
For wingëd horses and Aladdin's lamps,
Pure elfin-gold, by manhood's touch profane
To dead leaves disenchanted, — long ago
Between the branches of the tree fixed seats,
Making an o'erturned box their table. Oft
The shrilling girls sit here between school hours,
And play at *What 's my thought like?* while the boys,
With whom the age chivalric ever bides,
Pricked on by knightly spur of female eyes,
Climb high to swing and shout on perilous boughs,

dered in the first line of that poem, an epithet often repeated, and is described as one who had seen many cities of men, and known many minds.

Or, from the willow's armory equipped
With musket dumb, green banner, edgeless sword,
Make good the rampart of their tree-redoubt
'Gainst eager British storming from below,
And keep alive the tale of Bunker's Hill.

Here, too, the men that mend our village ways,
Vexing MacAdam's ghost with pounded slate,
Their nooning take; much noisy talk they spend
On horses and their ills; and, as John Bull
Tells of Lord This or That, who was his friend,
So these make boast of intimacies long
With famous teams, and add large estimates,
By competition swelled from mouth to mouth,
Of how much they could draw, till one, ill pleased
To have his legend overbid, retorts:
"You take and stretch truck-horses in a string
From here to Long Wharf end, one thing I know,
Not heavy neither, they could never draw, —
Ensign's long bow!" Then laughter loud and long.
So they in their leaf-shadowed microcosm
Image the larger world; for wheresoe'er
Ten men are gathered, the observant eye
Will find mankind in little, as the stars
Glide up and set, and all the heavens revolve
In the small welkin of a drop of dew.

I love to enter pleasure by a postern,
Not the broad popular gate that gulps the mob;
To find my theatres in roadside nooks,
Where men are actors, and suspect it not;

266. Macadamized roads have kept alive the name of Sir John Loudon Macadam, who introduced the mode at the beginning of this century.

Where Nature all unconscious works her will,
And every passion moves with human gait,
Unhampered by the buskin or the train.
Hating the crowd, where we gregarious men
Lead lonely lives, I love society,
Nor seldom find the best with simple souls
Unswerved by culture from their native bent,
The ground we meet on being primal man
And nearer the deep bases of our lives.

But oh, half heavenly, earthly half, my soul,
Canst thou from those late ecstasies descend,
Thy lips still wet with the miraculous wine
That transubstantiates all thy baser stuff
To such divinity that soul and sense,
Once more commingled in their source, are lost, —
Canst thou descend to quench a vulgar thirst
With the mere dregs and rinsings of the world?
Well, if my nature find her pleasure so,
I am content, nor need to blush; I take
My little gift of being clean from God,
Not haggling for a better, holding it
Good as was ever any in the world,
My days as good and full of miracle.
I pluck my nutriment from any bush,
Finding out poison as the first men did
By tasting and then suffering, if I must.
Sometimes my bush burns, and sometimes it is
A leafless wilding shivering by the wall;
But I have known when winter barberries
Pricked the effeminate palate with surprise
Of savor whose mere harshness seemed divine.

315. As did Moses's bush.

Oh, benediction of the higher mood
And human-kindness of the lower! for both
I will be grateful while I live, nor question
The wisdom that hath made us what we are,
With such large range as from the ale-house bench
Can reach the stars and be with both at home.
They tell us we have fallen on prosy days,
Condemned to glean the leavings of earth's feast
Where gods and heroes took delight of old;
But though our lives, moving in one dull round
Of reputation infinite, become
Stale as a newspaper once read, and though
History herself, seen in her workshop, seem
To have lost the art that dyed those glorious panes,
Rich with memorial shapes of saint and sage,
That pave with splendor the Past's dusky aisles, —
Panes that enchant the light of common day
With colors costly as the blood of kings,
Till with ideal hues it edge our thought, —
Yet while the world is left, while nature lasts,
And man the best of nature, there shall be
Somewhere contentment for these human hearts,
Some freshness, some unused material
For wonder and for song. I lose myself
In other ways where solemn guide-posts say,
This way to Knowledge, This way to Repose,
But here, here only, I am ne'er betrayed,
For every by-path leads me to my love.

God's passionless reformers, influences,
That purify and heal and are not seen,
Shall man say whence your virtue is, or how
Ye make medicinal the wayside weed?

I know that sunshine, through whatever rift
How shaped it matters not, upon my walls
Paints disks as perfect-rounded as its source,
And, like its antitype, the ray divine,
However finding entrance, perfect still,
Repeats the image unimpaired of God.

We, who by shipwreck only find the shores
Of divine wisdom, can but kneel at first;
Can but exult to feel beneath our feet,
That long stretched vainly down the yielding deeps,
The shock and sustenance of solid earth;
Inland afar we see what temples gleam
Through immemorial stems of sacred groves,
And we conjecture shining shapes therein;
Yet for a space we love to wonder here
Among the shells and sea-weed of the beach.

So mused I once within my willow-tent
One brave June morning, when the bluff northwest,
Thrusting aside a dank and snuffling day
That made us bitter at our neighbors' sins,
Brimmed the great cup of heaven with sparkling cheer
And roared a lusty stave; the sliding Charles,
Blue toward the west, and bluer and more blue,
Living and lustrous as a woman's eyes
Look once and look no more, with southward curve
Ran crinkling sunniness, like Helen's hair
Glimpsed in Elysium, insubstantial gold;
From blossom-clouded orchards, far away
The bobolink tinkled; the deep meadows flowed
With multitudinous pulse of light and shade

Against the bases of the southern hills,
While here and there a drowsy island rick
Slept and its shadow slept; the wooden bridge
Thundered, and then was silent; on the roofs
The sun-warped shingles rippled with the heat;
Summer on field and hill, in heart and brain,
All life washed clean in this high tide of June.

ODE

WRITTEN FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE INTRODUCTION OF THE COCHITUATE WATER INTO THE CITY OF BOSTON.

My name is Water: I have sped
Through strange, dark ways, untried before,
By pure desire of friendship led,
Cochituate's ambassador;
He sends four royal gifts by me:
Long life, health, peace, and purity.

I'm Ceres' cup-bearer; I pour,
For flowers and fruits and all their kin,
Her crystal vintage, from of yore
Stored in old Earth's selectest bin,
Flora's Falernian ripe, since God
The wine-press of the deluge trod.

In that far isle whence, iron-willed,
The New World's sires their bark unmoored,
The fairies' acorn-cups I filled
Upon the toadstool's silver board,

4. Lake Cochituate, about twenty miles from Boston, is the principal source from which Boston city obtains its water, brought thence by an aqueduct.

7. Ceres, the goddess of corn, harvest, and flowers.

11. Water is here referred to, *Flora's Falernian* being used in the same way that we sometimes use the expression *Adam's Ale.* Falernus Ager is a part of Italy famed in antiquity for its wine.

And, 'neath Herne's oak, for Shakespeare's sight,
Strewed moss and grass with diamonds bright.

No fairies in the Mayflower came,
And, lightsome as I sparkle here,
For Mother Bay State, busy dame,
I 've toiled and drudged this many a year,
Throbbed in her engines' iron veins,
Twirled myriad spindles for her gains.

I, too, can weave: the warp I set
Through which the sun his shuttle throws,
And, bright as Noah saw it, yet
For you the arching rainbow glows,
A sight in Paradise denied
To unfallen Adam and his bride.

When Winter held me in his grip,
You seized and sent me o'er the wave,
Ungrateful! in a prison-ship;
But I forgive, not long a slave,
For, soon as summer south-winds blew,
Homeward I fled, disguised as dew.

For countless services I 'm fit,
Of use, of pleasure, and of gain,
But lightly from all bonds I flit,
Nor lose my mirth, nor feel a stain;
From mill and wash-tub I escape,
And take in heaven my proper shape.

17. See Shakespeare's *Merry Wives of Windsor*, Act. IV., Scene IV.

21. Massachusetts is called the Bay State because the original colony was called the Colony of Massachusetts Bay.

32. Referring to the ice-trade, which was first undertaken on a large scale in Massachusetts.

So, free myself, to-day, elate
I come from far o'er hill and mead,
And here, Cochituate's envoy, wait
To be your blithesome Ganymede,
And brim your cups with nectar true
That never will make slaves of you.

THE COURTIN'.

God makes sech nights, all white an' still
Fur 'z you can look or listen,
Moonshine an' snow on field an' hill,
All silence an' all glisten.

Zekle crep' up quite unbeknown
An' peeked in thru' the winder,
An' there sot Huldy all alone,
'ith no one nigh to hender.

A fireplace filled the room's one side
With half a cord o' wood in —
There warn't no stoves (tell comfort died)
To bake ye to a puddin'.

The wa'nut logs shot sparkles out
Towards the pootiest, bless her,
An' leetle flames danced all about
The chiny on the dresser.

Agin the chimbley crook-necks hung,
An' in amongst 'em rusted

46. The cup-bearer of the gods.

The ole queen's-arm thet gran'ther Young
Fetched back from Concord busted.

The very room, coz she was in,
Seemed warm from floor to ceilin',
An' she looked full ez rosy agin
Ez the apples she was peelin'.

'T was kin' o' kingdom-come to look
On sech a blessed cretur,
A dogrose blushin' to a brook
Ain't modester nor sweeter.

He was six foot o' man, A 1,
Clear grit an' human natur';
None could n't quicker pitch a ton
Nor dror a furrer straighter.

He 'd sparked it with full twenty gals,
Hed squired 'em, danced 'em, druv 'em,
Fust this one, an' then thet, by spells —
All is, he could n't love 'em.

But long o' her his veins 'ould run
All crinkly like curled maple,
The side she breshed felt full o' sun
Ez a south slope in Ap'il.

She thought no v'ice hed sech a swing
Ez hisn in the choir;
My! when he made Ole Hunderd ring,
She *knowed* the Lord was nigher.

An' she 'd blush scarlit, right in prayer,
When her new meetin'-bunnet
Felt somehow thru' its crown a pair
O' blue eyes sot upon it.

Thet night, I tell ye, she looked *some!*
She seemed to 've gut a new soul,
For she felt sartin-sure he 'd come,
Down to her very shoe-sole.

She heered a foot, an' knowed it tu,
A-raspin' on the scraper, —
All ways to once her feelins flew
Like sparks in burnt-up paper.

He kin' o' l'itered on the mat,
Some doubtfle o' the sekle,
His heart kep' goin' pity-pat,
But hern went pity Zekle.

An' yit she gin her cheer a jerk
Ez though she wished him furder,
An' on her apples kep' to work,
Parin' away like murder.

"You want to see my Pa, I s'pose?"
"Wal . . . no . . . I come dasignin'" —
"To see my Ma? She 's sprinklin' clo'es
Agin to-morrer's i'nin'."

To say why gals acts so or so,
Or don't, 'ould be presumin';
Mebby to mean *yes* an' say *no*
Comes nateral to women.

He stood a spell on one foot fust,
Then stood a spell on t' other,
An' on which one he felt the wust
He could n't ha' told ye nuther.

Says he, "I 'd better call agin;"
Says she, "Think likely, Mister:"
Thet last word pricked him like a pin,
An' . . . Wal, he up an' kist her.

When Ma bimeby upon 'em slips,
Huldy sot pale ez ashes,
All kin' o' smily roun' the lips
An' teary roun' the lashes.

For she was jes' the quiet kind
Whose naturs never vary,
Like streams that keep a summer mind
Snowhid in Jenooary.

The blood clost roun' her heart felt glued
Too tight for all expressin',
Tell mother see how metters stood,
An' gin 'em both her blessin'.

Then her red come back like the tide
Down to the Bay o' Fundy,
An' all I know is they was cried
In meetin' come nex' Sunday.

TO H. W. LONGFELLOW

ON HIS BIRTHDAY, 27TH FEBRUARY, 1867.

I NEED not praise the sweetness of his song,
Where limpid verse to limpid verse succeeds
Smooth as our Charles, when, fearing lest he wrong
The new moon's mirrored skiff, he slides along,
Full without noise, and whispers in his reeds.

With loving breath of all the winds his name
Is blown about the world, but to his friends
A sweeter secret hides behind his fame,
And Love steals shyly through the loud acclaim
To murmur a *God bless you!* and there ends.

As I muse backward up the checkered years
Wherein so much was given, so much was lost,
Blessings in both kinds, such as cheapen tears, —
But hush! this is not for profaner ears;
Let them drink molten pearls nor dream the cost.

Some suck up poison from a sorrow's core,
As naught but nightshade grew upon earth's ground;
Love turned all his to heart's-ease, and the more

3. The river Charles, near which were the homes of Lowell and Longfellow.

Fate tried his bastions, she but forced a door
Leading to sweeter manhood and more sound.

Even as a wind-waved fountain's swaying shade
Seems of mixed race, a gray wraith shot with sun,
So through his trial faith translucent rayed
Till darkness, half disnatured so, betrayed
A heart of sunshine that would fain o'errun.

Surely if skill in song the shears may stay
And of its purpose cheat the charmed abyss,
If our poor life be lengthened by a lay,
He shall not go, although his presence may,
And the next age in praise shall double this.

Long days be his, and each as lusty-sweet
As gracious natures find his song to be;
May Age steal on with softly-cadenced feet
Falling in music, as for him were meet
Whose choicest verse is harsher-toned than he!

AGASSIZ.

[Jean Louis Rudolphe Agassiz was of Swiss birth, having been born in Canton Vaud, Switzerland, in 1807 (see Longfellow's pleasing poem, "The Fiftieth Birthday of Agassiz"), and had already made a name as a naturalist, when he came to this country to pursue investigations in 1846. Here he was persuaded to remain, and after that identified himself with American life and learning. He was a masterly teacher, and by his personal enthusiasm and influence did more than any one man in America to stimulate study in natural history.[1] Through his name a great institution, the Museum of Comparative Zoölogy, was established at Cambridge, in association with Harvard University, and he remained at the head of it until his death in 1874. His home was in Cambridge, and he endeared himself to all with whom he was associated by the unselfishness of his ambition, the generosity of his affection, and the liberality of his nature. Lowell was in Florence at the time of Agassiz's death, and sent home this poem, which was published in the "Atlantic Monthly" for May, 1874. Longfellow, besides in the poem mentioned above, has written of Agassiz in his sonnets, "Three Friends of Mine," III., and Whittier also wrote "The Prayer of Agassiz." These poems are well worth comparing, as indicating characteristic strains of the three poets.]

[1] See Appendix.

Come
Dicesti *egli ebbe?* non viv' egli ancora?
Non fiere gli occhi suoi lo dolce lome?
Dante, *Inferno*, Canto X. lines 67–69.
[How
Saidst thou, — he had? Is he not still alive?
Does not the sweet light strike upon his eye?
Longfellow, *Translation.*]

I.

1.

THE electric nerve, whose instantaneous thrill
Makes next-door gossips of the antipodes,
Confutes poor Hope's last fallacy of ease, —
The distance that divided her from ill:
Earth sentient seems again as when of old
The horny foot of Pan
Stamped, and the conscious horror ran
Beneath men's feet through all her fibres cold:
Space's blue walls are mined; we feel the throe
From underground of our night-mantled foe:
The flame-winged feet
Of Trade's new Mercury, that dry-shod run
Through briny abysses dreamless of the sun,
Are mercilessly fleet,
And at a bound annihilate
Ocean's prerogative of short reprieve;
Surely ill news might wait,
And man be patient of delay to grieve:
Letters have sympathies

6. Since Pan was the deity supposed to pervade all nature, the mysterious noises which issued from rocks or caves in mountainous regions were ascribed to him, and an unreasonable fear springing from sudden or unexplained causes came to be called a *panic*.

12. Mercury, the messenger of the gods, and fabled to have winged sandals, was the tutelar divinity of merchants, so that in a double way the modern application to the spirit of the electric telegraph becomes fit.

And tell-tale faces that reveal,
To senses finer than the eyes,
Their errand's purport ere we break the seal;
They wind a sorrow round with circumstance
To stay its feet, nor all unwarned displace
The veil that darkened from our sidelong glance
The inexorable face:
But now Fate stuns as with a mace;
The savage of the skies, that men have caught
And some scant use of language taught,
Tells only what he must, —
The steel cold fact in one laconic thrust.

2.

So thought I, as, with vague, mechanic eyes,
I scanned the festering news we half despise
Yet scramble for no less,
And read of public scandal, private fraud,
Crime flaunting scot-free while the mob applaud,
Office made vile to bribe unworthiness,
And all the unwholesome mess
The Land of Broken Promise serves of late

39. At the time when this poem was written there was a succession of terrible disclosures in America of public and private corruption; loud vaunts were made of dishonoring the national word in financial matters, and there were few who did not look almost with despair upon the condition of public affairs. The aspect was even more sharply defined to those Americans who, travelling in Europe, found themselves openly or silently regarded as representatives of a nation that seemed to be disgracing itself. Lowell's bitter words were part of the goadings of conscience which worked so sharply in America in the years immediately following. He was reproached by some for such words as this line contains, and, when he published his *Three Memorial Poems*, made this noble self-defence which stands in the front of that little book: —

> "If I let fall a word of bitter mirth
> When public shames more shameful pardon won,
> Some have misjudged me, and my service done,
> If small, yet faithful, deemed of little worth;

To teach the Old World how to wait,
When suddenly,
As happens if the brain, from overweight
Of blood, infect the eye,
Three tiny words grew lurid as I read,
And reeled commingling: *Agassiz is dead.*
As when, beneath the street's familiar jar,
An earthquake's alien omen rumbles far,
Men listen and forebode, I hung my head,
And strove the present to recall,
As if the blow that stunned were yet to fall.

3.

Uprooted is our mountain oak,
That promised long security of shade
And brooding-place for many a wingëd thought;
Not by Time's softly warning stroke
By pauses of relenting pity stayed,
But ere a root seemed sapt, a bough decayed,
From sudden ambush by the whirlwind caught
And in his broad maturity betrayed!

4.

Well might I, as of old, appeal to you,
O mountains, woods, and streams,

Through veins that drew their life from Western earth
Two hundred years and more my blood hath run
In no polluted course from sire to son;
And thus was I predestined ere my birth
To love the soil wherewith my fibres own
Instinctive sympathies; yet love it so
As honor would, nor lightly to dethrone
Judgment, the stamp of manhood, nor forego
The son's right to a mother dearer grown
With growing knowledge and more chaste than snow."

59. In classical mythology Adonis was fabled as a lovely youth, killed by a

To help us mourn him, for ye loved him too;
But simpler moods befit our modern themes,
And no less perfect birth of nature can,
Though they yearn tow'rds him, sympathize with man,
Save as dumb fellow-prisoners through a wall;
Answer ye rather to my call,
Strong poets of a more outspoken day,
Too much for softer arts forgotten since
That teach our forthright tongue to lisp and mince,
Lead me some steps in your directer way,
Teach me those words that strike a solid root
Within the ears of men;
Ye chiefly, virile both to think and feel,
Deep-chested Chapman and firm-footed Ben, —
For he was masculine from head and heel.
Nay, let himself stand undiminished by
With those clear parts of him that will not die.
Himself from out the recent dark I claim
To hear, and, if I flatter him, to blame;
To show himself, as still I seem to see,

boar, and lamented long by Venus, who was inconsolable for his loss. The poets used this story for a symbol of grief, and when mourning the loss of a human being were wont to call on nature to join in the lamentation. This classic form of mourning descended in literature, and at different times has found very beautiful expression, as in Milton's *Lycidas* and Shelley's *Adonais*, which is a lament over the dead poet Keats. Here the poet might justly call on nature to lament the death of her great student, but he turns from the form as too classic and artificial and remote from his warmer sympathy. In his own strong sense of human life he demands a fellowship of grief from no lower order of nature than man himself.

74. Chapman and Ben Jonson were contemporaries of Shakespeare. The former is best known by his rich, picturesque translation of Homer. Lowell may easily have had in mind among Jonson's *Elegies*, his majestic ode, *On the Death of Sir Lucius Cary and Sir H. Morison*. He rightly claims for the poets of the Elizabethan age a frankness and largeness of speech rarely heard in our more refined and restrained time.

A mortal, built upon the antique plan,
Brimful of lusty blood as ever ran,
And taking life as simply as a tree!
To claim my foiled good-by let him appear,
Large-limbed and human as I saw him near,
Loosed from the stiffening uniform of fame:
And let me treat him largely: I should fear
(If with too prying lens I chanced to err,
Mistaking catalogue for character),
His wise forefinger raised in smiling blame.
Nor would I scant him with judicial breath
And turn mere critic in an epitaph;
I choose the wheat, incurious of the chaff
That swells fame living, chokes it after death,
And would but memorize the shining half
Of his large nature that was turned to me:
Fain had I joined with those that honored him
With eyes that darkened because his were dim,
And now been silent: but it might not be.

II.

1.

In some the genius is a thing apart,
A pillared hermit of the brain,
Hoarding with incommunicable art
Its intellectual gain;
Man's web of circumstance and fate
They from their perch of self observe,
Indifferent as the figures on a slate
Are to the planet's sun-swung curve
Whose bright returns they calculate;

84. Since the poet could not be by Agassiz at the last.

Their nice adjustment, part to part,
Were shaken from its serviceable mood
By unpremeditated stirs of heart
Or jar of human neighborhood:
Some find their natural selves, and only then,
In furloughs of divine escape from men,
And when, by that brief ecstasy left bare,
Driven by some instinct of desire,
They wander worldward, 't is to blink and stare,
Like wild things of the wood about the fire,
Dazed of the social glow they cannot share;
His nature brooked no lonely lair,
But basked and bourgeoned in copartnery,
Companionship, and open-windowed glee:
He knew, for he had tried,
Those speculative heights that lure
The unpractised foot, impatient of a guide,
Tow'rds ether too attenuately pure
For sweet unconscious breath, though dear to pride,
But better loved the foothold sure
Of paths that wind by old abodes of men
Who hope at last the churchyard's peace secure,
And follow time-worn rules, that them suffice,
Learned from their sires, traditionally wise,
Careful of honest custom's how and when;
His mind, too brave to look on Truth askance,
No more those habitudes of faith could share,

118. Travellers in the wilderness find their camp-fires the attraction of the beasts that prowl about the camp.

123. "Agassiz was a born metaphysician, and moreover had pursued severe studies in philosophy. Those who knew him well were constantly surprised at the ease with which he handled the more intricate problems of thought." Theodore Lyman, in *Recollections of Agassiz*, *Atlantic Monthly*, February, 1874.

But, tinged with sweetness of the old Swiss manse,
Lingered around them still and fain would spare.
Patient to spy a sullen egg for weeks,
The enigma of creation to surprise,
His truer instinct sought the life that speaks
Without a mystery from kindly eyes;
In no self-woven silk of prudence wound,
He by the touch of men was best inspired,
And caught his native greatness at rebound
From generosities itself had fired;
Then how the heat through every fibre ran,
Felt in the gathering presence of the man,
While the apt word and gesture came unbid!
Virtues and faults it to one metal wrought,
Fined all his blood to thought,
And ran the molten man in all he said or did.
All Tully's rules and all Quintilian's too
He by the light of listening faces knew,
And his rapt audience all unconscious lent
Their own roused force to make him eloquent;
Persuasion fondled in his look and tone;
Our speech (with strangers prudish) he could bring
To find new charms in accents not her own;
Her coy constraints and icy hindrances
Melted upon his lips to natural ease,
As a brook's fetters swell the dance of spring.
Nor yet all sweetness: not in vain he wore,
Nor in the sheath of ceremony, controlled
By velvet courtesy or caution cold,
That sword of honest anger prized of old,

152. Tully is the now somewhat old-fashioned English way of referring to Marcus Tullius Cicero, whose book *De Oratore* and Quintilian's *Institutiones Oratoriæ* were the most celebrated ancient works on rhetoric.

But, with two-handed wrath,
If baseness or pretension crossed his path,
Struck once nor needed to strike more.

2.

His magic was not far to seek, —
He was so human! whether strong or weak,
Far from his kind he neither sank nor soared,
But sate an equal guest at every board:
No beggar ever felt him condescend,
No prince presume; for still himself he bare
At manhood's simple level, and where'er
He met a stranger, there he left a friend.
How large an aspect! nobly unsevere,
With freshness round him of Olympian cheer,
Like visits of those earthly gods he came;
His look, wherever its good-fortune fell,
Doubled the feast without a miracle,
And on the hearthstone danced a happier flame;
Philemon's crabbed vintage grew benign;
Amphitryon's gold-juice humanized to wine.

III.

1.

The garrulous memories
Gather again from all their far-flown nooks,
Singly at first, and then by twos and threes,
Then in a throng innumerable, as the rooks
Thicken their twilight files

183. For the stories of *Philemon* and *Amphitryon*, see Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, viii. 631, and vi. 112.

Tow'rds Tintern's gray repose of roofless aisles:
Once more I see him at the table's head
When Saturday her monthly banquet spread
To scholars, poets, wits,
All choice, some famous, loving things, not names,
And so without a twinge at others' fames,
Such company as wisest moods befits,
Yet with no pedant blindness to the worth
Of undeliberate mirth,
Natures benignly mixed of air and earth.
Now with the stars and now with equal zest
Tracing the eccentric orbit of a jest.

2.

I see in vision the warm-lighted hall,
The living and the dead I see again,
And but one chair is empty of them all; —
'T is I that seem the dead: they all remain
Immortal, changeless creatures of the brain:
Well-nigh I doubt which world is real most,
Of sense or spirit, to the truly sane;
In this abstraction it were light to deem
Myself the figment of some stronger dream;
They are the real things, and I the ghost
That glide unhindered through the solid door,
Vainly for recognition seek from chair to chair,
And strive to speak and am but futile air,
As truly most of us are little more.

190. Tintern Abbey, on the river Wye, is one of the most famous ruins in England. About this, as other ruins and shaded buildings, the rooks make their home.

192. A club known as the Saturday Club has for many years met in Boston, and some of the prominent members are intimated in the following lines.

3.

Him most I see whom we most dearly miss,
The latest parted thence,
His features poised in genial armistice
And armed neutrality of self-defence
Beneath the forehead's walled preëminence
While Tyro, plucking facts with careless reach,
Settles off-hand our human how and whence;
The long-trained veteran scarcely wincing hears
The infallible strategy of volunteers
Making through Nature's walls its easy breach,
And seems to learn where he alone could teach.
Ample and ruddy, the room's end he fills
As he our fireside were, our light and heat,
Centre where minds diverse and various skills
Find their warm nook and stretch unhampered feet;
I see the firm benignity of face,
Wide-smiling champaign without tameness sweet,
The mass Teutonic toned to Gallic grace,
The eyes whose sunshine runs before the lips
While Holmes's rockets curve their long ellipse,
And burst in seeds of fire that burst again
To drop in scintillating rain.

4.

There too the face half-rustic, half-divine,
Self-poised, sagacious, freaked with humor fine,

216. Agassiz himself.

238. Ralph Waldo Emerson. The words *half-rustic, half-divine*, recall Lowell's earlier characterization in his *Fable for Critics:* —

"A Greek head on right Yankee shoulders, whose range
Has Olympus for one pole, for t' other the Exchange;

Of him who taught us not to mow and mope
About our fancied selves, but seek our scope
In Nature's world and Man's, nor fade to hollow trope;
Listening with eyes averse I see him sit
Pricked with the cider of the judge's wit
(Ripe-hearted homebrew, fresh and fresh again),
While the wise nose's firm-built aquiline
Curves sharper to restrain
The merriment whose most unruly moods
Pass not the dumb laugh learned in listening woods
Of silence-shedding pine;
Hard by is he whose art's consoling spell
Has given both worlds a whiff of asphodel,
His look still vernal 'mid the wintry ring
Of petals that remember, not foretell,
The paler primrose of a second spring.

5.

And more there are: but other forms arise
And seen as clear, albeit with dimmer eyes:
First he from sympathy still held apart
By shrinking over-eagerness of heart,
Cloud charged with searching fire, whose shadow's sweep
Heightened mean things with sense of brooding ill,
And steeped in doom familiar field and hill, —
New England's poet, soul reserved and deep,
November nature with a name of May,

He seems, to my thinking (although I am afraid
The comparison must, long ere this, have been made),
A Plotinus Montaigne, where the Egyptian's gold mist
And the Gascon's shrewd wit cheek by jowl coexist."

244. Judge E. R. Hoar.
251. Longfellow.
258. Nathaniel Hawthorne. He was buried in Concord, May 24, 1864.

Whom high o'er Concord plains we laid to sleep,
While the orchards mocked us in their white array,
And building robins wondered at our tears,
Snatched in his prime, the shape august
That should have stood unbent 'neath fourscore years,
The noble head, the eyes of furtive trust,
All gone to speechless dust;
And he our passing guest,
Shy nature, too, and stung with life's unrest,
Whom we too briefly had but could not hold,
Who brought ripe Oxford's culture to our board,
The Past's incalculable hoard,
Mellowed by scutcheoned panes in cloisters old,
Seclusions ivy-hushed, and pavements sweet
With immemorial lisp of musing feet;
Young head time-tonsured smoother than a friar's,
Boy face, but grave with answerless desires,
Poet in all that poets have of best
But foiled with riddles dark and cloudy aims.
Who now hath found sure rest,
Not by still Isis or historic Thames,
Nor by the Charles he tried to love with me,
But, not misplaced, by Arno's hallowed brim,
Nor scorned by Santa Croce's neighboring fames,
Haply not mindless, wheresoe'er he be,

272. Arthur Hugh Clough, an English poet, author of the *Bothie of Toberna-Vuolich*, and editor of *Dryden's Translation of Plutarch's Lives*, who came to this country in 1852 with some purpose of making it his home, but returned to England in less than a year. He lived while here in Cambridge, and strong attachments grew up between him and the men of letters in Cambridge and Concord.

287. Clough died in his forty-third year, November 13, 1861, and was buried in the little Protestant cemetery outside the walls of Florence.

288. *Santa Croce* is the church in Florence where many illustrious dead are buried, among them Michaelangelo, Machiavelli, Galileo, Alfieri.

Of violets that to-day I scattered over him;
He, too, is there,
After the good centurion fitly named,
Whom learning dulled not, nor convention tamed,
Shaking with burly mirth his hyacinthine hair,
Our hearty Grecian of Homeric ways,
Still found the surer friend where least he hoped the praise.

6.

Yea truly, as the sallowing years
Fall from us faster, like frost-loosened leaves
Pushed by the misty touch of shortening days,
And that unwakened winter nears,
'T is the void chair our surest guests receives,
'T is lips long cold that give the warmest kiss,
'T is the lost voice comes oftenest to our ears;
We count our rosary by the beads we miss:
To me, at least, it seemeth so,
An exile in the land once found divine,
While my starved fire burns low,
And homeless winds at the loose casement whine
Shrill ditties of the snow-roofed Apennine.

IV.

1.

Now forth into the darkness all are gone,
But memory, still unsated, follows on,
Retracing step by step our homeward walk,
With many a laugh among our serious talk,

291. Cornelius Conway Felton, Professor of Greek Language and Literature in Harvard College, and afterward President until his death in 1862.

Across the bridge where, on the dimpling tide,
The long red streamers from the windows glide,
Or the dim western moon
Rocks her skiff's image on the broad lagoon,
And Boston shows a soft Venetian side
In that Arcadian light when roof and tree,
Hard prose by daylight, dream in Italy;
Or haply in the sky's cold chambers wide
Shivered the winter stars, while all below,
As if an end were come of human ill,
The world was wrapt in innocence of snow
And the cast-iron bay was blind and still;
These were our poetry; in him perhaps
Science had barred the gate that lets in dream,
And he would rather count the perch and bream
Than with the current's idle fancy lapse;
And yet he had the poet's open eye
That takes a frank delight in all it sees,
Nor was earth voiceless, nor the mystic sky,
To him the life-long friend of fields and trees:
Then came the prose of the suburban street,
Its silence deepened by our echoing feet,
And converse such as rambling hazard finds;
Then he who many cities knew and many minds
And men once world-noised, now mere Ossian forms
Of misty memory, bade them live anew

315. In walking over West Boston bridge at night one sees the lights from the houses on Beacon Street reflected in the water below and seeming to make one long light where flame and reflection join.

337. See note to p. 40.

338. *Ossian* was a fabulous Celtic warrior poet known chiefly through the pretended poems of Ossian of James MacPherson who lived in Scotland the latter half of the eighteenth century. There has been much controversy over the exact relation of Macpherson to the poems, which are Scotch crags looming out of Scotch mists.

As when they shared earth's manifold delight,
In shape, in gait, in voice, in gesture true,
And, with an accent heightening as he warms,
Would stop forgetful of the shortening night,
Drop my confining arm, and pour profuse
Much worldly wisdom kept for others' use,
Not for his own, for he was rash and free,
His purse or knowledge all men's, like the sea.
Still can I hear his voice's shrilling might
(With pauses broken, while the fitful spark
He blew more hotly rounded on the dark
To hint his features with a Rembrandt light)
Call Oken back, or Humboldt, or Lamarck,
Or Cuvier's taller shade, and many more
Whom he had seen, or knew from others' sight,
And make them men to me as ne'er before:
Not seldom, as the undeadened fibre stirred
Of noble friendships knit beyond the sea,
German or French thrust by the lagging word,
For a good leash of mother-tongues had he.
At last, arrived at where our paths divide,
"Good night!" and, ere the distance grew too wide,
"Good night!" again; and now with cheated ear
I half hear his who mine shall never hear.

2.

Sometimes it seemed as if New England air
For his large lungs too parsimonious were,
As if those empty rooms of dogma drear

352. Naturalists of renown. *Oken* was a remarkable and eccentric Swiss naturalist, 1779-1851; *Humboldt* a great naturalist and traveller, known by his *Kosmos*, 1769-1859; *Lamarck*, 1744-1829; *Cuvier*, in some respects the father of modern classification, and a valued adviser of Agassiz, 1769-1832; all these were personally known to Agassiz.

Where the ghost shivers of a faith austere
Counting the horns o'er of the Beast,
Still scaring those whose faith in it is least,
As if those snaps o' th' moral atmosphere
That sharpen all the needles of the East,
Had been to him like death,
Accustomed to draw Europe's freer breath
In a more stable element;
Nay, even our landscape, half the year morose,
Our practical horizon grimly pent,
Our air, sincere of ceremonious haze,
Forcing hard outlines mercilessly close,
Our social monotone of level days,
Might make our best seem banishment,
But it was nothing so;
Haply his instinct might divine,
Beneath our drift of puritanic snow,
The marvel sensitive and fine
Of sanguinaria overrash to blow
And warm its shyness in an air benign;
Well might he prize truth's warranty and pledge
In the grim outcrop of our granite edge,
The Hebrew fervor flashing forth at need
In the stiff sons of Calvin's iron breed,
As prompt to give as skilled to win and keep;
But, though such intuitions might not cheer,
Yet life was good to him, and, there or here,
With that sufficing joy, the day was never cheap;
Thereto his mind was its own ample sphere,
And, like those buildings great that through the year
Carry one temperature, his nature large
Made its own climate, nor could any marge.

397. This is said of St. Peter's in Rome.

Traced by convention stay him from his bent:
He had a habitude of mountain air;
He brought wide outlook where he went,
And could on sunny uplands dwell
Of prospect sweeter than the pastures fair
High-hung of viny Neufchâtel,
Nor, surely, did he miss
Some pale, imaginary bliss
Of earlier sights whose inner landscape still was Swiss.

V.

1.

I cannot think he wished so soon to die
With all his senses full of eager heat,
And rosy years that stood expectant by
To buckle the winged sandals on their feet, —
He that was friends with earth, and all her sweet
Took with both hands unsparingly:
Truly this life is precious to the root,
And good the feel of grass beneath the foot;
To lie in buttercups and clover-bloom,
Tenants in common with the bees,
And watch the white clouds drift through gulfs of trees,
Is better than long waiting in the tomb;
Only once more to feel the coming spring
As the birds feel it when it makes them sing,
Only once more to see the moon
Through leaf-fringed abbey-arches of the elms
Curve her mild sickle in the West
Sweet with the breath of hay-cocks, were a boon

411. See note to p. 56, l. 12.

Worth any promise of soothsayer realms
Or casual hope of being elsewhere blest;
To take December by the beard
And crush the creaking snow with springy foot,
While overhead the North's dumb streamers shoot,
Till Winter fawn upon the cheek endeared;
Then the long evening ends
Lingered by cozy chimney-nooks,
With high companionship of books,
Or slippered talk of friends
And sweet habitual looks,
Is better than to stop the ears with dust:
Too soon the spectre comes to say, "Thou must!"

2.

When toil-crooked hands are crost upon the breast,
They comfort us with sense of rest;
They must be glad to lie forever still;
Their work is ended with their day;
Another fills their room; 't is the World's ancient way
Whether for good or ill;
But the deft spinners of the brain,
Who love each added day and find it gain,
Them overtakes the doom
To snap the half-grown flower upon the loom
(Trophy that was to be of life-long pain),
The thread no other skill can ever knit again.
'T was so with him, for he was glad to live,
'T was doubly so, for he left work begun;
Could not this eagerness of Fate forgive
Till all the allotted flax was spun?
It matters not: for go at night or noon,

A friend, whene'er he dies, has died too soon,
And, once we hear the hopeless *He is dead*,
So far as flesh hath knowledge, all is said.

VI.

1.

I seem to see the black procession go:
That crawling prose of death too well I know,
The vulgar paraphrase of glorious woe;
I see it wind through that unsightly grove,
Once beautiful, but long defaced
With granite permanence of cockney taste
And all those grim disfigurements we love:
There, then, we leave him: Him? such costly waste
Nature rebels at: and it is not true
Of those most precious parts of him we knew:
Could we be conscious but as dreamers be,
'T were sweet to leave this shifting life of tents
Sunk in the changeless calm of Deity;
Nay, to be mingled with the elements,
The fellow-servant of creative powers,
Partaker in the solemn year's events,
To share the work of busy-fingered hours,
To be night's silent almoner of dew,
To rise again in plants and breathe and grow,
To stream as tides the ocean cavern through,
Or with the rapture of great winds to blow
About earth's shaken coignes, were not a fate
To leave us all-disconsolate;
Even endless slumber in the sweetening sod
Of charitable earth

462. Mount Auburn cemetery in Cambridge, where Agassiz lies.

That takes out all our mortal stains,
And makes us clearlier neighbors of the clod
Methinks were better worth
Than the poor fruit of most men's wakeful pains,
The heart's insatiable ache:
But such was not his faith,
Nor mine: it may be he had trod
Outside the plain old path of *God thus spake,*
But God to him was very God,
And not a visionary wraith
Skulking in murky corners of the mind,
And he was sure to be
Somehow, somewhere, imperishable as He,
Not with His essence mystically combined,
As some high spirits long, but whole and free,
A perfected and conscious Agassiz.
And such I figure him: the wise of old
Welcome and own him of their peaceful fold,
Not truly with the guild enrolled
Of him who seeking inward guessed
Diviner riddles than the rest,
And groping in the darks of thought
Touched the Great Hand and knew it not;
He rather shares the daily light,
From reason's charier fountains won,
Of his great chief, the slow-paced Stagyrite,
And Cuvier clasps once more his long-lost son.

2.

The shape erect is prone: forever stilled
The winning tongue; the forehead's high-piled heap,

503. Plato.
509. Aristotle, so-called from his birthplace of Stagira in Macedonia.

A cairn which every science helped to build,
Unvalued will its golden secrets keep:
He knows at last if Life or Death be best:
Wherever he be flown, whatever vest
The being hath put on which lately here
So many-friended was, so full of cheer
To make men feel the Seeker's noble zest,
We have not lost him all; he is not gone
To the dumb herd of them that wholly die;
The beauty of his better self lives on
In minds he touched with fire, in many an eye
He trained to Truth's exact severity;
He was a Teacher: why be grieved for him
Whose living word still stimulates the air?
In endless files shall loving scholars come
The glow of his transmitted touch to share,
And trace his features with an eye less dim
Than ours whose sense familiar wont makes numb.

FLORENCE, ITALY, *February*, 1874.

APPENDIX.

[LOWELL'S poem on Agassiz presents many aspects of that remarkable man. The stimulus which he gave in this country to scientific research was followed by results in other departments of human learning, for the method employed in scientific study finds an application in history and literature also. In the study of literature the first lesson is in the power of seeing what lies before the student on the printed page, and the following sketch, which was published shortly after Agassiz's death, is given here, both because it is so entertaining an account of a student's experience, and because it points so clearly to the secret of all success in study, both of science and of literature.]

IN THE LABORATORY WITH AGASSIZ.

BY A FORMER PUPIL.

IT was more than fifteen years ago that I entered the laboratory of Professor Agassiz, and told him I had enrolled my name in the scientific school as a student of natural history. He asked me a few questions about my object in coming, my antecedents generally, the mode in which I afterwards proposed to use the knowledge I might acquire, and finally, whether I wished to study any special branch. To the latter I replied that while I wished to be well grounded in all departments of zoölogy, I purposed to devote myself specially to insects.

"When do you wish to begin?" he asked.

"Now," I replied.

This seemed to please him, and with an energetic "Very well," he reached from a shelf a huge jar of specimens in yellow alcohol.

"Take this *fish*," said he, "and look at it; we call it a Hæmulon; by and by I will ask what you have seen."

With that he left me, but in a moment returned with explicit instructions as to the care of the object intrusted to me.

"No man is fit to be a naturalist," said he, "who does not know how to take care of specimens."

I was to keep the fish before me in a tin tray, and occasionally moisten the surface with alcohol from the jar, always taking care to replace the stopper tightly. Those were not the days of ground glass stoppers, and elegantly shaped exhibition jars; all the old students will recall the huge, neckless glass bottles with their leaky, wax-besmeared corks, half eaten by insects and begrimed with cellar dust. Entomology was a cleaner science than ichthyology, but the example of the professor who had unhesitatingly plunged to the bottom of the jar to produce the fish was infectious; and though this alcohol had "a very ancient and fish-like smell," I really dared not show any aversion within these sacred precincts, and treated the alcohol as though it were pure water. Still I was conscious of a passing feeling of disappointment, for gazing at a fish did not commend itself to an ardent entomologist. My friends at home, too, were annoyed, when they discovered that no amount of *eau de cologne* would drown the perfume which haunted me like a shadow.

In ten minutes I had seen all that could be seen in that fish, and started in search of the professor, who had, however, left the museum; and when I returned, after lingering over some of the odd animals stored in the upper apartment, my specimen was dry all over. I dashed the fluid over the fish as if to resuscitate the beast from a fainting-fit, and looked with anxiety for a return of the normal, sloppy appearance. This little excitement over, nothing was to be done but return to a steadfast gaze at my mute companion. Half an hour passed, — an hour, — another hour; the fish began to look loathsome. I turned it over and around; looked it in the face, — ghastly; from behind, beneath, above, sideways, at a three quarters' view, — just as ghastly. I was in despair; at an early hour I concluded that lunch was necessary; so, with infinite relief, the fish was carefully replaced in the jar, and for an hour I was free.

On my return, I learned that Professor Agassiz had been at the museum, but had gone and would not return for several hours. My fellow-students were too busy to be disturbed by continued conversation. Slowly I drew forth that hideous fish, and with a feeling of desperation again looked at it. I might not use a magnifying glass; instruments of all kinds were interdicted. My two hands, my two eyes, and the fish; it seemed a most limited field. I pushed my finger down its throat to feel how sharp the teeth were. I began to count the scales in the different rows until I was convinced that that was non-

sense. At last a happy thought struck me — I would draw the fish; and now with surprise I began to discover new features in the creature. Just then the professor returned.

"That is right," said he; "a pencil is one of the best of eyes. I am glad to notice, too, that you keep your specimen wet and your bottle corked."

With these encouraging words, he added, —

"Well, what is it like?"

He listened attentively to my brief rehearsal of the structure of parts whose names were still unknown to me: the fringed gill-arches and movable operculum; the pores of the head, fleshy lips, and lidless eyes; the lateral line, the spinous fins, and forked tail; the compressed and arched body. When I had finished, he waited as if expecting more, and then, with an air of disappointment, —

"You have not looked very carefully; why," he continued, more earnestly, "you have n't even seen one of the most conspicuous features of the animal, which is as plainly before your eyes as the fish itself; look again, look again!" and he left me to my misery.

I was piqued; I was mortified. Still more of that wretched fish? But now I set myself to my task with a will, and discovered one new thing after another, until I saw how just the professor's criticism had been. The afternoon passed quickly, and when, toward its close, the professor inquired, —

"Do you see it yet?"

"No," I replied, "I am certain I do not, but I see how little I saw before."

"That is next best," said he, earnestly, "but I won't hear you now; put away your fish and go home; perhaps you will be ready with a better answer in the morning. I will examine you before you look at the fish."

This was disconcerting; not only must I think of my fish all night, studying, without the object before me, what this unknown but most visible feature might be, but also, without reviewing my new discoveries, I must give an exact account of them the next day. I had a bad memory; so I walked home by Charles River in a distracted state, with my two perplexities.

The cordial greeting from the professor the next morning was reassuring; here was a man who seemed to be quite as anxious as I, that I should see for myself what he saw.

"Do you perhaps mean," I asked, "that the fish has symmetrical sides with paired organs?"

His thoroughly pleased, "Of course, of course!" repaid the wakeful hours of the previous night. After he had discoursed most happily

and enthusiastically — as he always did — upon the importance of this point, I ventured to ask what I should do next.

"Oh, look at your fish!" he said, and left me again to my own devices. In a little more than an hour he returned and heard my new catalogue.

"That is good, that is good!" he repeated; "but that is not all; go on;" and so for three long days he placed that fish before my eyes, forbidding me to look at anything else, or to use any artificial aid. "Look, look, look," was his repeated injunction.

This was the best entomological lesson I ever had, — a lesson whose influence has extended to the details of every subsequent study; a legacy the professor has left to me, as he left it to many others, of inestimable value, which we could not buy, with which we cannot part.

A year afterwards some of us were amusing ourselves with chalking outlandish beasts upon the museum blackboard. We drew prancing star-fishes; frogs in mortal combat; hydra-headed worms; stately crawfishes, standing on their tails, bearing aloft umbrellas; and grotesque fishes with gaping mouths and staring eyes. The professor came in shortly after, and was as amused as any at our experiments. He looked at the fishes.

"Hæmulons, every one of them," he said; "Mr. —— drew them." True; and to this day, if I attempt a fish, I can draw nothing but Hæmulons.

The fourth day a second fish of the same group was placed beside the first, and I was bidden to point out the resemblances and differences between the two; another and another followed, until the entire family lay before me, and a whole legion of jars covered the table and surrounding shelves; the odor had become a pleasant perfume: and even now, the sight of an old, six-inch, worm-eaten cork brings fragrant memories!

The whole group of Hæmulons was thus brought in review; and, whether engaged upon the dissection of the internal organs, the preparation and examination of the bony frame-work, or the description of the various parts, Agassiz's training in the method of observing facts and their orderly arrangement was ever accompanied by the urgent exhortation not to be content with them.

"Facts are stupid things," he would say, "until brought into connection with some general law."

At the end of eight months it was almost with reluctance that I left these friends and turned to insects; but what I had gained by this outside experience has been of greater value than years of later investigation in my favorite groups.

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